

REMARKS

Claims 1-26, 29 and 30 are currently pending in the application. Claims, 8, 9, and 15 are hereby cancelled.

Claims 5-7, 21-26 and 29 are allowed.

Claims 4 and 17 stand objected to as each depending upon a rejected base claim. Each has been rewritten in independent form so as to be allowable.

Claims 1-3, 10-14, 16, 18-20 and 30 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,054,159 (Richardson) in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,476,119 (Nagle).

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-3, 10-14, 16, 18-20 and 30 is requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 8 and intervening claim 3. Claim 8 characterizes the first and second tubular elements as repositionable into a second relative axial position, wherein the first and second tubular elements are allowed to move from the first relative rotational position into the first relative rotational position. In other words, the first and second tubular elements can be placed selectively: a) in a first relative axial position wherein the first and second tubular elements can be moved between a first relative rotational position and a second relative rotational position; and b) into a second relative axial position wherein the first and second tubular elements can be moved between the corresponding first and second relative rotational positions.

Nagle discloses only one relative axial position between elements 7 and 14 wherein the elements 7 and 14 can be relatively moved between first and second relative rotational positions. The cited combination of Richardson and Nagle does not teach or make obvious this structure. Accordingly, claim 1 is believed allowable.

Claims 2, 3, 10-14 and 18-20 depend cognately from claim 1 and recite further significant structural limitations to further distinguish over the applied art.

Claim 16 has been rewritten in independent form. Claim 16 includes the limitation that the projection has an elongate shape with a length that is directed in a circumferential direction at an angle to a plane orthogonal to the second axis. This elongate configuration, and the orientation claimed, potentially allow for consistent, stable, guiding movement between the first and second tubular elements. With this arrangement, the slots can have a relatively narrow axial dimension, yet the tubular elements will nonetheless be capable of being guided smoothly and stably, one relative to the other.

The Examiner, on page 7 of the Action, refers to the change in shape as a design consideration. That may be true when the change in shape has nothing to do with function. However, in this case, the change in shape accounts for potentially different operating characteristics that are significant in terms of the overall performance of the apparatus. Accordingly, claim 16 is believed allowable.

Claim 30 has been amended to characterize the step of relatively moving the first and second tubular elements as comprising causing at least a part of at least one of the first and second connecting assemblies to radially deform to thereby allow the circumferentially facing surfaces to move circumferentially up to and past each other so as to confront each other.

Nagle discloses nothing more than apparent axial deformation of the pin and/or slot edge. Consequently, the operation of the mechanism in Nagle and that recited in claim 30 is very different. Nagle would have to be completely redesigned to arrive at a structure that

could be used to practice the method of claim 3. No such modification is taught in or obvious from Nagle.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-3, 10-14, 16 18-20 and 30 and allowance of the case are requested.

The additional claim, fee of \$300.00 is enclosed. Should additional fees be required in connection with this matter, please charge our deposit account No. 23-0785.

Respectfully submitted,

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